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Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 7, 2023, at 3 p.m.

House of Representatives

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2023

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

February 6, 2023.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MARIANNETTE MILLER-MEEKS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

KEVIN MCCARTHY,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 9, 2023, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

FAILED BIDEN ADMINISTRATION POLICIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. JOYCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, tomorrow evening, President Biden will deliver his second State of the Union Address and attempt to defend his failed agenda, an agenda that has led to high inflation, crumbling supply chains, and, worst of all, an open southern border that has led to far too many deaths from drugs like fentanyl.

We have seen reckless government spending drive the price of household goods out of reach for so many families. We have seen businesses forced to shut down assembly lines because of ridiculous vaccine mandates that led to critical components rusting in our ports instead of arriving on time at factories in Pennsylvania. As we stand in this body today, the number one killer of Americans between the ages of 18 and 49 is fentanyl poisoning.

We need the President to show that he is willing to work with Congress to address the crises that his administration has caused. We need to cut spending. We need to slow inflation. We need to see that real American families have an administration that is listening to them. We need to end the public health emergency that has led to a shortage of healthcare workers. We need to finally see a plan to address the crisis that we all recognize at our southern border.

Two weeks ago, parents from Franklin County, Pennsylvania, Ray and Deb Cullen, came before the Energy and Commerce Committee and told the story of their son Zach, who lost his life to fentanyl poisoning just a few short months ago.

It is time for President Biden to address this crisis that has killed thousands of men, women, and children across Pennsylvania and offer us a concrete solution to secure our border and put a stop to these needless American deaths.

American families are struggling, and so far, we have seen shockingly few attempts from the Biden administration to confront kitchen table issues that face every American.

Pennsylvanians do not need a Green New Deal-focused EPA that threatens to take away their gas stoves. Families in my district do not need more government handouts that only raise the price of groceries, gas, cars, and housing and continue to grow our national debt.

What Americans need tomorrow night here in this Chamber are answers. We can't afford another year of emptiness. We cannot afford another year of President Biden's failed policies.

EXTEND THE DEBT CEILING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, on January 13, 2023, the Secretary of the Treasury, Janet Yellen, announced that the United States had hit its debt ceiling, which is a legal authorization that Congress has done on a recurring basis since the early 1900s that allows our Treasury to go out and sell bonds so we can pay the bills for our country,

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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whether it is fentanyl issues, whether it is our military, or whether it is our education programs.

Normally, when the Secretary of the Treasury gives that type of announcement, responsible leadership in Congress takes up the task of extending the debt ceiling so that our government can continue to function. We are talking about paying the bills for existing budgets that have already been passed. That is what the debt ceiling empowers by Congress moving forward.

It has been 18 days since Ms. Yellen's warning to the country and to the world, and the leadership of the House has done absolutely nothing. We have passed a series of pointless resolutions that have no legal impact in terms of real lives of people in this country and a bunch of bills that we know are immediately dead on arrival in the Senate.

Again, as the clock ticks, the world wants to know: What is the Speaker's position? What does he want in terms of doing what every Speaker, Republican and Democrat, has done over and over again to protect the full faith and credit of our currency and the paper that the Treasury sells, again, as basically the gold standard in terms of financial markets across the world?

Mr. MCCARTHY has not told us.

What is at work here? If we look at the Republican Study Group, which consists of roughly 170 Members, they have been talking openly and publicly about the fact that they want to do entitlement reform, which is to go after Social Security and Medicare.

Madam Speaker, I would just say that this is a very off-target proposal and solution because, in fact, Social Security has no bearing in terms of the operating deficit of the Federal Government, which, again, the Speaker claims that he cares so much about.

Social Security is funded through a separate revenue stream, the payroll tax that comes out of working people's paychecks every single pay period that goes into a fund that, again, is separate and distinct from the operating budget of the Federal Government.

The proposals of the Republican Study Group, which are to raise the retirement age from 67 to 70 and to impose a degraded level of CPI cost-of-living adjustment, a changed CPI, would hit middle-class Americans hard, particularly younger ones because this is definitely proposed as sort of a two-tiered Social Security system.

There is a fundamental flaw in the whole approach that is being suggested and discussed by the Republican Study Group, which is the claim that the Medicare and Social Security systems are entitlements.

Entitlement is not a legal term. It is not a budget term. It is a political term. It is an attempt to try to mask the fact that Social Security, since Franklin Roosevelt signed it into law 80 years ago, is a social insurance program.

If you don't believe me, look at your paycheck. What your paycheck shows

is that the withholding for Social Security is separate from your Federal taxes, which go into the operating budget of this country, and is designated as the Federal Insurance Contributions Act, FICA, for old-age insurance.

Again, it is an insurance program, and it provides coverage for people who are retired because they have hit retirement age, for young people who have lost a parent, or for people on disability.

If we were responsible about trying to deal with the fact that Social Security is going to be challenged in 2033—it is going to have a shortfall; it is not going to go bankrupt, which the press sometimes says—there is a solution to that, which is to lift the earnings cap. Today, basically anyone who earns income above \$160,000 suddenly doesn't have to pay into the Social Security system.

As Warren Buffett, a billionaire, aptly pointed out, he is paying less into Social Security than his secretary. It is called the Buffett rule. The solution, which basically says everybody pays the same rate, or at least people whose income is above \$400,000, would overnight push back the solvency for decades to ensure that young people, in particular, are going to have Social Security just like all the Americans in the preceding 80 years have had. That is really one of the pillars of middle-class economic security.

In the meantime, the clock is ticking. We know that we are really not just going to go at the debt ceiling, but we are going to hit full default by June 1.

This leadership has to do the right thing, just like we have done in past Presidencies and past Congresses: Extend the debt ceiling.

FUNDING UKRAINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GAETZ. Madam Speaker, how much more for Ukraine? Is there any limit? Which billionth dollar really kicks in the door? Which redline that we set will we not later cross?

China reminds us that we have real issues. China began its offensive against our homeland by infiltrating our universities, stealing our innovations, buying off our politicians, and surveilling our citizens, all the while capturing the loyalty of America's most powerful corporations. China's influence is overtaking ours, even in our own hemisphere.

Our conflict with China may turn very hot very soon. Many believe we are currently in the window of a possible invasion of Taiwan. If not deterred, such an invasion would immediately make life worse for virtually every American.

Tomorrow, President Biden will tell us how much more we must do for Ukraine. Look around your house. How

much stuff is made in Ukraine or even Russia, for that matter? Next, do China. If you are watching this speech on a smartphone, you are likely using Taiwanese technology.

So why Ukraine, a country that just rounded up dozens of senior leaders in its government over overt corruption? Perhaps the answer is as simple as the Hunter Biden life motto: a grifter's gotta grift.

The amount of money we now pour into Ukraine makes Burisma's wildest dreams of wealth through Biden family influence seem meek by comparison.

Defense contractors need there to be a war going on somewhere, whether the arms end up in the hands of ISIS, the Taliban, the Azov battalion, or on the black market. They get rich in the business of weapons supply, but only when there is weapons demand.

A serious nation would never let foreign interests abroad or special interests here at home dictate its foreign policy. The interests of our countrymen must morally compel our greater attention. As the war slogs on in Ukraine, the benefits to Americans are unclear.

Bandits in the Sinaloa mountains hurt more Americans than the men in Crimea, but foreigners come to Washington to lecture us about spending our constituents' money on a conflict thousands of miles away, and my colleagues are eager to oblige.

On this floor, Zelenskyy's demands got bipartisan standing ovations—from most. Stingers, HIMARS, tanks, at first, we said no to all of these things. President Biden even said that some of these things might lead to world war III, yet we sent all of them.

F-16s are likely still. Lockheed Martin sure is confident that Ukraine will get F-16s. They told the Financial Times recently that they are already ramping up production. Create the demand; provide the supply.

This is escalating. We are placing trust in leaders who do not deserve trust.

John Kirby, the Pentagon spokesman who assured us the Afghan military would withstand the Taliban offensive, now says that there is no risk that Putin will go nuclear.

The risk of miscalculation in Ukraine is much, much higher than getting it wrong in Afghanistan. A nuclear war between Russia and the United States would end human life as we know it.

□ 1215

Yet, President Biden is doing everything possible to provoke such a disaster.

And for what?

The actions we are taking are not going to end the war in Ukraine. In fact, we are probably prolonging the killing. Tens of thousands of Ukrainians and Russians will die this year because Congress feels good when it sends instruments of death and billions in cash.